IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for punching unfired, sheetlike ceramic substrates, in particular so-called green sheets, comprising:

~~having~~ a receiving device (~~6~~), which has a substantially flat receiving face for a ceramic substrate (~~32~~), and in which punched holes (~~7~~) are embodied;

~~having~~ at least one die (~~8~~), which is disposed above [[a]] an associated respective punched hole (~~7~~) and has a shaft (~~15~~) and an operative portion (~~23~~) that extends through a stripper opening (~~24~~) and whose diameter is less than the diameter of the shaft (~~15~~) and greater than the diameter of ~~an~~ the associated punched hole (~~7~~), and the operative portion (~~23~~) has a punching portion (~~26~~) whose diameter is somewhat less than the diameter of the punched hole (~~7~~)[[,]];

~~having~~ a drive mechanism, which is connected in driving fashion to the die (~~8~~) in order to move linearly by a defined stroke and in the process to move the punching portion (~~26~~) into the punched hole (~~7~~) and out of it[[,]]; and

~~having~~ a die guide device (~~17~~), through which the shaft (~~15~~) extends and which guides the die (~~8~~) at its shaft (~~15~~).

2. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the punching portion (~~26~~) is unguided in the transverse direction.

3. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the die guide device (~~17~~) includes a bush (~~18~~) with a passage which defines a guide face for the shaft (~~15~~).

4. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the stripper opening ~~(24)~~ has a length that exceeds the length of the punching portion ~~(26)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the length of the punching portion ~~(26)~~ is essentially equal to the length of the stroke of the drive mechanism.

6. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the length of the operative portion ~~(23)~~ is greater than the stroke of the drive mechanism.

7. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the punched hole ~~(7)~~ is a through bore, which opens into a slug conduit ~~(28)~~ which has a greater diameter than the punched hole ~~(7)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The punching device of claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the diameter of the shaft ~~(15) amounts to~~ is a multiple of the diameter of the operative portion ~~(23)~~.

9. (New) A device for punching sheet-like substrates, comprising:

a receiving device having a substantially flat receiving face for a ceramic substrate, and having a punched hole formed in the flat surface;

a die disposed above the punched hole, said die having a shaft, and an operative portion that extends through and is guided in a stripper opening disposed above the punched hole, said operative portion including a first part that is guided by a surface defining the stripper opening and has a diameter that is less than the diameter of the shaft and greater than the diameter of the punched hole, and a second punching part that is disposed at a lower end of the first part, and has a

diameter that is less than the diameter of the first part and slightly less than the diameter of the punched hole;

a drive mechanism connected in driving fashion to the die to move the die linearly by a defined stroke and in the process move the punching part into and out of the punched hole; and,

a die guide through which the shaft extends and which guides the die shaft.

10. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the shaft, and first and second parts of the operative portion of the die are each cylindrical.

11. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the punching part is unguided in the transverse direction in the stripper opening.

12. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the die guide device includes a bush with a passage that defines a guide surface for the shaft.

13. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the stripper opening has a length that exceeds the length of the punching part so that a portion of the first part is always guided within the stripper opening. .

14. (New) The punching device of claim 13, wherein the length of the punching part is essentially equal to the length of the stroke of the drive mechanism.

15. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the length of the punching part is essentially equal to the length of the stroke of the drive mechanism.

16. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the length of the operative portion is greater than the stroke of the drive mechanism.

17. (New) The punching device of claim 9, wherein the diameter of the first part is less than the diameter of the stripper opening by a clearance amount.

18. (New) A tool for punching sheet-like substrates, comprising:

a lower tool part having a substantially flat receiving face for a substrate, and having a punched hole formed in the flat surface;

an upper tool part;

a die having a shaft, and an graduated operative portion including a first part having a diameter that is less than the diameter of the shaft and greater than the diameter of the punched hole, and a second punching part disposed at a lower end of the first part and having a diameter that is less than the diameter of the first part and slightly less than the diameter of the punched hole;

a linear die guide disposed in the upper tool part above the punched hole;

a stripper bush mounted on a surface of the upper tool part facing the lower tool part and having a stripper opening disposed above the punched hole;

said die being disposed above the punched hole and mounted in the an upper tool part for linear movement toward and away from the lower tool part, with the shaft of the die being disposed in and guided by the linear die guide, and the first part of the operative portion of the die extending through the stripper opening and being guided by a wall of the stripper bush defining the stripper opening; and,

a drive mechanism connected in driving fashion to the die to move the die linearly by a defined stroke and in the process move the punching part into and out of the punched hole.

19. (New) The punching device of claim 18, wherein the shaft, and first and second parts of the operative portion of the die are each cylindrical.

20. (New) The punching device of claim 19, wherein the diameter of the first part is less than the diameter of the stripper opening by a clearance amount.